

Currents

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New photographs by Andy Freeberg take aim at the “architecture of intimidation” practiced in the galleries of Chelsea in Manhattan, as one gallery owner, James Danziger, put it. These luminous, comical and slyly trenchant studies of the front desks of big names (and desks) in the art world — including (clockwise from top left) Andrea Rosen, Metro Pictures, Sonnabend and, behind Mr. Freeberg, Cheim & Read — are on view in a show called “Sentry” at Mr. Danziger’s own Chelsea gallery.

The first photo was unstaged, Mr. Freeberg said recently. “I was in Pace Wildenstein, this massive space with this massive desk,” he said, “and all you could see was the top of the head of the person sitting behind it. It seemed like the desks had gotten bigger since my last visit. I took the picture without them ever knowing I’d done it.”

Early this summer, Mr. Freeberg presented his work to a few gallery owners (but to only one of his subjects, a gallery specializing in photographs), using a secure Web site; a day later, the images appeared on a photography blog known as Conscientious (jmcoberg.com). “By the next day, there were 350 hits from 30 countries,” he said. That, presumably, is how one gallery worker whose desk was the subject of a photograph saw the work. “He sent me an e-mail,” Mr. Freeberg said. “He was really upset. He said he thought the work showed a lack of engagement with the subject.”

Framed images are \$2,400 to \$4,800. Through Oct. 13 at Danziger Projects, 521 West 26th Street, (212) 629-6778 or danzigerprojects.com. *PENELOPE GREEN*

Photo: Above right, top left and top right, Andy Freeberg; above left Stefan Kirkeby

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